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## Joakim Hjortland

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Since I was 6 years old, my goal in life was to become a professional soccer player. It was my passion and my talent; if I was not playing on the field, I was playing FIFA, watching soccer, or talking about it. So when God told me to leave it behind, I was devastated and confused.

One summer when I was 17, I was reading this story of the rich young ruler, and the spirit of God spoke to me. He impressed me with this thought: “The ruler did everything right. He went to church and knew the commandments, but he loved money more than God. That is soccer for you. Soccer is your idol. You need to quit.” The more I tried to shake the thought away, the more I understood that it was God speaking to me. My clear direction in life began shifting, leaving me lost.

Although I have been attending church all my life, there were unanswered questions in my faith and Christianity. I always believed in God, but mustering up courage and faith to place my life in God’s hands was not easy. However, as I submitted everything to God and his plans, He began to transform me. All aspects of my life—my time, talents, resources, relationships, entertainment, music, sports, clothes, etc.—started to change. The things that I used to love lost meaning, and I started to love the things that mattered most: God and ministry. More and more, I dedicated my time and talents to God, preaching, evangelizing and doing mission work.

A group of us started a ministry organization called IMPACT when I was 19. Since launching in 2009, it has spread to nine countries with hundreds of young missionaries sharing the Gospel and reflecting God’s love in their communities. God transformed a 17-year-old who knew nothing but soccer into a ministry leader.

We often fear that we are unequipped to serve. With God, it is not so much about ability but rather availability; He qualifies all those he calls to do his work. Leaving my life’s plans behind was difficult, and I didn’t completely understand at the time, but I never regretted my decision! I now look at the plans He had for me with gratitude and awe and am reminded of His love daily.

Completing religion classes online helps me impact my community through several ministries. While studying through Andrews University, I am also qualifying as an electrician. These skills are opening doors as I make friends with people in need of electrical work. Through friendships, trust develops in talking about eternal matters. Being able to finish my BA in religion online makes it possible for me to continue with ministry and electrician work here in Bergen, Norway.

God always has something bigger to offer us than what we seek for ourselves. My dream once was to play soccer and win games, but God knew my purpose was incompatible with His. He called me to something much greater, more meaningful and exciting: to win souls for His Kingdom.

Learn more about Joakim and his ministries: [IMPACT](#), [Empower Missions](#), [ASI Scandinavia](#)

Book: [A Prophet For This Generation](#)

Videos: [Testimony](#), [Joakim’s Andrews Experience](#)



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